

serious question. We cannot kick the can down the road any longer. We do not have any more road to kick it to.

So what I ask of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle is let us set aside politics. Let us not worry about a reelection campaign. Let us not worry about our own personal interests. Let us come together as one Nation and deal with this problem because it is a serious threat and a clear and present danger to our very existence as a country.

Let me also be very clear that what we need to do with handling this debt is to send a message that we have answered the call and send a message to the world and to all the markets that America is strong; America is the place that you can invest in again. And by that investment, we will put people back to work. We will provide for families for generations, not only now but for generations we do not even see. This is about putting people back to work and being the voice that leads this Nation to greatness once again.

I have no doubt we will succeed in this effort, but it will take true leadership. There is no doubt in my mind that I join my colleagues on this side of the aisle and say no more of the petty political bickering. It is time to stand and lead, and we shall.

NO BOOTS ON THE GROUND IN LIBYA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Puerto Rico for allowing me to speak out of order. Thank you very much.

We recently passed the 2-month mark since the military air campaign in Libya began. This is significant because the War Powers Act requires that a President must receive a congressional mandate for any military action within 60 days. The deadline came and went without any resolution being brought before this body, which is a signal that our engagement in Libya is lingering without much accountability or checks, without a vigorous debate about the consequences of what we are doing there.

Who knows exactly what our mission is and how we will know when we have achieved it? What is the end game? What are the metrics or benchmarks for success?

At the same time, this week we will debate an amendment to the defense bill that would expand the authorization for use of military force, empowering the President, any President, to fire bombs and missiles against any nation or nonstate actor that appears to pose a threat. And without so much as a check-in or consultation with Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I have had enough. I have had enough of this state of permanent warfare. I have five grandchildren,

and not one of them knows what it is like to live in a country that is not at war with someone and killing someone else's grandchildren. It is time to put the brakes on. It is time for Congress to draw some clear lines, and Libya is the perfect place to do so.

I am proud to support the amendment offered today by my friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), that will specifically prohibit the deployment of ground troops in Libya. We cannot afford any further expansion of this engagement. We owe it to the American people who are footing the bill and, of course, to our servicemen and -women who are already fighting on two fronts.

To keep this mission from mushrooming into a full-blown ground war and military occupation, we must stop now. We must not put boots on the ground in Libya, and we must close any loophole that allows any President to do so.

We still have combat troops in Iraq. We are spending a staggering \$10 billion a month on an ongoing war in Afghanistan that has been a devastating moral and strategic failure. We can't keep doing this, Mr. Speaker. Our military is at a breaking point. The American people's patience is wearing thin. Two wars are already more than we can handle.

Let's define the mission in Libya, let's complete it, and let's get out. Anything less is a replay of Iraq and Afghanistan, where we must move quickly to bring our troops home.

THE LAST NAIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the last nail is being driven into the coffin of the American Republic. Yet Congress remains in total denial as our liberties are rapidly fading before our eyes.

The process is propelled by unwarranted fear and ignorance as to the true meaning of liberty. It is driven by economic myths, fallacies, and irrational good intentions. The rule of law is constantly rejected and authoritarian answers are offered as panaceas for all our problems.

Runaway welfarism is used to benefit the rich at the expense of the middle class. Who would have ever thought that the current generation and Congress would stand idly by and watch such a rapid disintegration of the American Republic?

Characteristic of this epic event is the casual acceptance by the people and the political leaders of the unitary Presidency, which is equivalent to granting dictatorial powers to the President.

Our Presidents can now, on their own: order assassinations, including American citizens; operate secret military tribunals; engage in torture; enforce indefinite imprisonment without due process; order searches and sei-

zures without proper warrants, gutting the Fourth Amendment; ignore the 60-day rule for reporting to the Congress the nature of any military operations as required by the War Powers Resolution; continue the Patriot Act abuses without oversight; wage war at will; treat all Americans as suspected terrorists at airports with TSA groping and nude x-raying.

And the Federal Reserve accommodates by counterfeiting the funds needed and not paid for by taxation and borrowing, permitting runaway spending, endless debt, and special interest bailouts.

And all of this is not enough. The abuses and usurpations of the war power are soon to be codified in the National Defense Authorization Act now rapidly moving its way through Congress.

Instead of repealing the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, as we should now that bin Laden is dead and gone, Congress is planning to massively increase the war power of the President.

Though an opportunity presents itself to end the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, Congress, with bipartisan support, obsesses on how to expand the unconstitutional war power the President already holds.

The current proposal would allow a President to pursue war any time, any place, for any reason, without congressional approval. Many believe this would even permit military activity against American suspects here at home.

The proposed authority does not reference the 9/11 attacks. It would be expanded to include the Taliban and "associated" forces, a dangerously vague and expansive definition of our potential enemies.

□ 1040

There is no denial that the changes in section 1034 totally eliminate the hard-fought-for restraint on Presidential authority to go to war without congressional approval achieved at the Constitutional Convention.

Congress' war authority has been severely undermined since World War II, beginning with the advent of the Korean War, which was fought solely under a U.N. resolution.

Even today we're waging war in Libya without even consulting with the Congress, similar to how we went to war in Bosnia in the 1990s under President Clinton.

The three major reasons for our Constitutional Convention were to: guarantee free trade and travel among the States; make gold and silver legal tender and abolish paper money; and strictly limit the executive branch's authority to pursue war without congressional approval.

But today: Federal Reserve notes are legal tender, gold and silver are illegal; the Interstate Commerce Clause is used to regulate all commerce at the expense of free trade among the States;